

## Heaven's Entrance Criteria

The word "criteria" means a standard or rule by which something is judged, or a decision is made. We may not realize it, but every day we employ criteria in the things we do or decisions we make. When a person applies for a job, certain criteria must be met for the performance of duties. The equipment used in sports must meet a specific criterion as does the vehicle we drive. It is all part of life and that's the way it is.

When it comes to going to Heaven, God has declared that a specific criterion **MUST** be met. And, because God said it, that settles it and those wanting to go to Heaven must believe and conform to it. While trying to be brief, I shall share this criterion.

Jesus Christ said, "... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." {John 3:3} The word "Except" means unless and the word "born again" means to not have any part. The word "see" means to be fitted for or partake of. In simple language, if people have been spiritually born again, then it is impossible for them to be properly fitted for anything to do with Heaven.

Jesus Christ said, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." {John 14:6} Jesus was **NOT** saying that He was a way among many ways; He said that He was **THE** way – **THE ONLY WAY!** The only way that it is possible for people to approach God the Father is through the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ stressed the importance {necessity} of repentance. Repent or repentance means to think differently, to reconsider. In other words, to realize that the way people are going {how they are living} is wrong according to God's Word and therefore repent, to have a change of mind and heart. As one man once said, repent means to take God's side against our sins. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent** ye, and believe the gospel." {Mark 1:14-15} Jesus sent His disciples out to preach the Gospel and, after they received their instructions, "And they went out, and preached that men should **repent.**" {Mark 6:12} Without repentance, a person cannot be born again.

God's Word tells us that it is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us of our sins and makes us fit for Heaven. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Hebrews 9:13-14} "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb without blemish and without spot:" {1 Peter 1:18-19} The sacrifice of animals in the Old Testament was a temporary atonement for sin. When Jesus Christ, who is God the Son, left Heaven and came to earth as THE Messiah, He did so for one reason. What was that reason? So that, with the body of a man, He could die on the Cross of Calvary as the full and final payment of our sin debt. Jesus was perfectly innocent; He did not commit any sins of any kind. When He died on the Cross, our sin debt was placed on Him. Jesus shed His innocent blood and died in our place, He was buried and three days later He bodily rose from the grave [that is what Easter is all about] and today He is in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" {Hebrews 10:12}

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." {1 John 1:7}

God's Word says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." {Ephesians 2:8-9} The salvation that is needed for people to go to Heaven is purely by faith in what God has said. It is impossible for a person to do enough good works to get them into Heaven. What is faith? Read what God says about it: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence

of things not seen.” [substance: or, ground, or, confidence] {Hebrews 11:1} It simply means to trust God and take Him at His Word! Our faith comes from the Word of God. “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” {Romans 10:17} “...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son [Jesus Christ] of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth [to have faith in] him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth [to have faith in] in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” {John 3:16} Having faith in God and what He has said is an absolute must for salvation and eternal life in Heaven. “He that believeth [has faith] on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not [has no faith] the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. {John 3:36}

**INFORMATION ONLY**

The results of doing what God has said; repentance and by faith alone in the blood of Jesus Christ results in the forgiveness of sin and eternal life. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” {1 John 5:13} Jesus said, “...that where I am, there ye may be also.” {John 14:3}

Well friend, the final decision is now up to you. Will you repent of your sin and by faith alone in the blood of Jesus Christ receive Him as your personal Saviour? It is my prayer that you will! TODAY!!

~Richard A. Ciarrocca/2019

All Scripture references are KJV